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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Although in their press releases the Czechoslovak government and Party profess satisfaction over the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, it has lately been evident that a systematically directed whispering campaign against Austria is spreading throughout Czechoslovakia. The aim of this campaign is to picture the internal situation in Austria as critical and to discredit Austria in the eyes of the Czech people.
2. One widely circulated rumor among the Czech population has it that the Austrian population, with the backing of the government, has adopted a menacing attitude towards Austrian Communists. The Austrian government is said to have taken coercive measures against Communist employees of former Soviet-controlled industries. Austrian Communist Party members reportedly were ejected from their homes and had to flee the country. Many hundreds of Austrian Communist refugees are said to be in the area of Brno where they have sought protection from the Czech government.
3. The rumor campaign has lately reached the point where a prominent member of the diplomatic corps in Prague asked the Austrian Minister if it was true that the Austrian government had ordered all Austrian Communists to wear special identifying badges, similar to those worn by Jews under the Nazi regime. He also wanted to know whether the Austrian border authorities were subjecting East-orbit visitors to all kinds of harassing procedures in order to demonstrate to them that there is now a "new course" in Austria.

Comment. Spreading unfavorable rumors about Austria is very probably the work of the Czech Communist Party which is attempting to counteract the wave of good feeling towards Austria which spread among the Czech people after the signing of the State Treaty, particularly since it was accompanied by high hopes for the liberation of Czechoslovakia from the Russian grip. It would not be surprising to learn that the Czech Communists are assisted in this campaign by their Austrian colleagues.

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